



Est: 1918

Brown County Beekeepers Association Newsletter

May 2021

Website
BCBA

www.browncountybeekeepers.com

Facebook

**Northeast WI
Beekeepers
Join Today**

Bees and Brews!

*Tuesday evening
May 4, 2021
6:00 PM
Via ZOOM*

BCBA Mission Statement:

We are dedicated to promoting sustainable, responsible, and healthy beekeeping practices in Northeast Wisconsin for both experienced and first-time beekeepers. We strive to create a fun environment where learning opportunities exist for association members and the general public.

President's Message:

Spring is here and hopefully the cooler temps are behind us. Beekeeping activity is ramping up as installs, splits and setting up for summer configuration are taking place. These are exciting times for beekeepers.

Please watch the club Facebook page for times when we will be working the Botanical Gardens Hives by the greenhouse. Feel free to join us.

The club has many outdoor activities coming up this summer. Check them out let us know if you are interested in participating.

Dave
President, Brown County Beekeepers Association

Interesting Fact(s):

- . Honey bees are not born knowing how to make honey. Instead, they are taught in the hive by older bees.
- . Honey is 25% sweeter than table sugar.
- . Honey is the only foodstuff that contains all of the necessary nutrients to sustain life.

Upcoming Meetings

Bees and Brews

Time: **Tuesday, May 4th, 2021 6:00 PM**

Meeting ID: 894 1552 6186 Passcode: 797119

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89415526186?pwd=NmdHYzMrS2Vld0xaZHIBSEw0dlg4QT09>

BCBA May Meeting

May 19, 2021

Our May meeting will be held both on Zoom and in person at the Botanical Gardens.

(MBM) Meeting before the meeting – Mite Test and sugar roll starting at 5:00 PM
Botanical Gardens. 1/4 mile from entrance, park in NWTC lot, walk across street through gate entrance.

Used equipment auction:

Viewing – Gardens Parking lot at **5:30**, Auction starting at **5:45**.

May education topic – *Oxalic Acid* **Matt Hoepfinger, Bee Informed Partnership**

Time: **6:30 PM**

Meeting ID: 811 9585 1003 Passcode: 585452

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81195851003?pwd=MFBhZHBwejVYS0g1c3FZL0M1ZU5lQT09>

Last chance to register for the: **Honey Themed Dinner**

Join fellow BCBA members for a fun filled, informative evening at Ledgestone Vineyard, Greenleaf, WI while Chef Ace Champion entertains us with his unique cooking style. A three course dinner will be served.

When: June 29, 2021

Time: 5:00 to 6:00 Happy Hour cash bar

6:00 to 8:00 Cooking demo and dinner

Cost: BCBA Member \$25 (only one member per family)

BCBA Guest \$45

- Limit - 50 persons.
- Event held outdoors and will follow health department COVID recommendations.
- Chef Ace will provide recipes for each dish.
- Door Prizes

Honey Themed Dinner Registration form on last page of this Newsletter!

Attention!

Don't miss our fantastic lineup of education and topics for this year! Make note and put them on your calendar! Some local experts and nationally renowned beekeeping speakers are part of this lineup!!

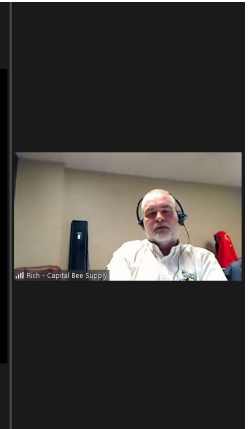
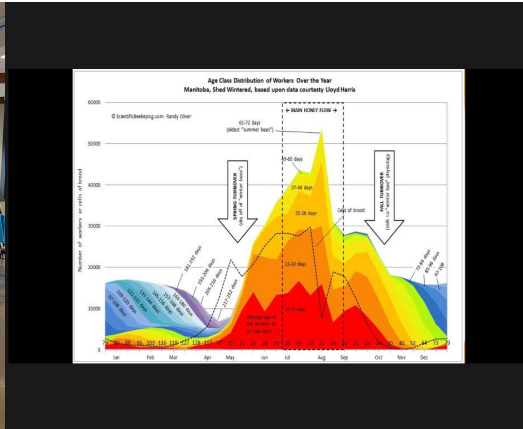
Dates	Topic	Edu Type	Presenter
Jan 19 '21		Special	Dr. Kirsten Traynor
Jan 20 '21	First Year Beekeeping	Reg	Jenny Renfro, Bob Michiels
Feb 17 '21	Splits	Reg	Craig Spindler , Let it Bee
Mar 17 '21	What are you Missing: Advances in Hive Monitoring	Reg	Bridget Mendel Lee , Minnesota Bee Squad
Apr 20 '21	Special Event	Special	Dr. Jamie Ellis
Apr 21 '21	Installing Bees Spring Management	MBM Reg	Rich Schneider , Capital Bee Supply
May 19 '21	Mite Test - Sugar Roll Oxalic Acid	MBM Reg	Matt Hoepfinger , Bee Informed Partnership
Jun 16 '21	Hive Inspections (At Hive) Hive Management	MBM Reg	(TBD)
Aug 18 '21	Honey Extraction Winter Management	MBM Reg	Charlotte Hubbard , President Kalamazoo Bee Club
Sep 15 '21	Special Guest:		Randy Oliver – Scientific Beekeeping
Oct 20 '21	Queen Rearing	Reg	Augie Linskens
Nov 17 '21	Products of the Hive	Reg	

Don't do what I did section: Today, with a couple of good friends I was going to do a split on one of my hives. It was a very healthy hive and definitely ripe to swarm. Lots of bees, larvae, capped brood, capped honey, nectar and pollen. It was a thriving hive. It was a bit cold today, bees weren't too happy with us so we seemed to be in a bit of a hurry. There was a frame that had a lot of comb on the bottom that needed removing. So, in a hurry, I used my hive tool to remove the comb. As I started scrapping the comb off, I notice an extra large bee fall. Yes, unfortunately it was the queen. ;o(So, yes a lesson to be learned the hard way... Don't hurry!! Now I have two hives without a queen...the split and the hive I split from. A sad day.

April Meeting Highlights!

Hope you didn't miss it!

We had a very successful April meeting on April 21st at the Botanical Gardens and on Zoom. Our guest speaker was Rich Schneider of Capital Bee Supply talking about Spring Maintenance. Rich gave us an excellent talk!



On April 20th, we joined 3 other clubs and listened to Dr. Jamie Ellis talk about swarming and swarm control! It was a very informative meeting.



To follow more of what Dr. Ellis does and to learn more, check out the following.

Stimuli

Honey bee colonies always have a strong drive to swarm, however, swarming will usually occur in response to specific stimuli.

These stimuli include:

- resource availability,
- longer, warmer days,
- drone abundance,
- congested nests,
- lack of open brood cells,
- dilution of queen pheromone,
- aging queens, and
- the production of new queens.

Follow my laboratory on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook: @ufhoneybeelab or online at www.ufhoneybee.com

Jamie Ellis, PhD
Gahan Endowed Professor
jdellis@ufl.edu
University of Florida
Entomology and Nematology Department

May - WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD OF BEES

Seasonal conditions

In Brown County, Wisconsin

Average low temperature - 45

Average high - 56.

Average Precipitation – 3.6 inches.

Average Snow – 0 inches

In the hive

Egg laying and brood rearing are in high gear, with the brood area expanding rapidly. The bees are foraging for pollen and nectar to support this colony growth. They are likely to be less defensive than in fall, with less to protect and lots to do! With the growing population and possible overcrowding, mid-May is the beginning of swarm season. Queen cups are being built along the lower edges of brood frames. If the hive is crowded, some cups will likely be laid in. The drone population is growing. The Varroa mite population is also building.

Inspection

- Colony inspections should now take place every two weeks and include evaluating the brood pattern, confirming the presence of the queen and/or eggs, evaluating colony growth and available room, monitoring for pests and diseases, and other metrics. Record Keeping is key to making these inspections useful and actionable.
- If you cannot inspect every one of your colonies, inspect those that are not showing as much activity on the outside.
- If the bottom hive body is empty, you might consider moving it above brood nest.
- If you install a package or nuc, allow two weeks for the colony to establish before you inspect it.
-

Nutrition

- The bees should be foraging for what they need, but they also need a lot at this time, so remain vigilant and prepared to feed sugar syrup or a pollen supplement if necessary.
- Provide supers if the brood chambers are full and the population/stores are growing with the first honey flows of spring.
- Feed package bees or nucs upon their arrival.
-

Pests, parasites, and diseases

- Monthly inspections should include monitoring for a range of pests and diseases: look for problems on the outside of the colony, in the brood, and on the adult bees themselves.
- Monitor Varroa mite levels. At this point in the year, if you find two or more mites (per 100 bees) from a sugar shake, ether roll, or alcohol wash, you will want to treat. Treatment methods will depend on your management goals, the condition of the colony, and external conditions. Drone comb can be an effective cultural method at this time of year. This may be a good time to break the brood cycle (and therefore the Varroa reproduction cycle) by caging the queen or making splits.
- Monitor for Nosema. It is present all year, but regular monitoring will still help you understand your normal levels and when/if they peak, particularly if you are seeking to understand why a colony is struggling.

- Replace with fresh foundation or newly drawn comb two of your oldest frames in each hive body to reduce the accumulation of Nosema spores, American foulbrood spores, and pesticides.

Population management

- Install any new packages or nucs that arrive.
- Swarm control: if you do not want your bees to swarm, provide them with plenty of room and check that the colony is not honey bound (meaning that there is honey in or around the brood nest effectively restricting the access of the queen from other areas where she would lay eggs). Move the honey combs out of the brood nest and into a super if needed.
- Keep an eye out for swarm cells. You may consider splitting the strongest colonies, particularly if you are looking to grow your operation or keep nucs in reserve. Cutting out swarm cells can prevent swarming as well, but needs to be done thoroughly and often (every few days).
- You may be able to catch swarms this month.
- Combine weak and strong colonies or equalize them if you want, but only after you have checked for diseases in the weak colony.
- If your inspection reveals that a queen is under performing, if you want the vigor of a young queen, or if you want to introduce new stock for Varroa resistance or other properties, you might consider re-queening. This is a good month to do it, although local queens are probably in short supply this early in the year.
- This is the best time (swarm season) to rear queens. To get from an egg to a mated and laying queen takes about one month. Continue to build your cell builder colony while preventing it from swarming.
- Check regularly for swarm cells, and cut out any you find.

Equipment

- Remove any remaining insulation, winter wraps, mouse guards, etc. Entrance reducers can be left on; many beekeepers use them year-round.
- Consider adding a queen excluder to manage the honey supers more easily.
- Set up bait hives if you want to catch a swarm.
- Foundation will be more likely to be drawn out during a honey flow.

Hive products and services

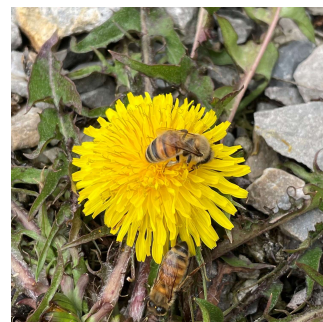
- Cut-outs tend to be easier this time of year, when populations are low.
- You may be able to trap a small amount of pollen for later use or sale; this needs close monitoring to keep the pollen usable and frequent breaks to keep the bees adequately provisioned.

Yard maintenance

- Mow the yard as necessary.



Thank goodness dandelions
are back!! Never thought I'd
be saying that before I got
into beekeeping!



Club Discounts

Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI

- 15% Discount for all first time purchases
- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- Note: You must use specific code for these discounts.
- Contact BCBA Secretary for this code! (secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com)

Club Sponsor – Let It Bee, Inc., Greenville, WI

- 15% Discount for all first time purchases
- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- When purchasing ***in-store only***, let them know you are a member of the BCBA.

Bee Culture and American Bee Journal Subscriptions



ABJ Association
Member Subscriptio



Bee Culture
Subscription.pdf

BCBA Leadership

President: Dave Elsen
president@browncountybeekeepers.com

Vice President:
Julie Mazzoleni
vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com

Secretary:
Bob Michiels
secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com

Treasurer:
Tom Cashman
Tcash99930@aol.com

Social Media Chair:
Carl Fisher
info@browncountybeekeepers.com

Membership Chair:
OPEN

Education Chair:
OPEN

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WHPA Youth Program Mentors: Contact Julie Mazzoleni
 Botanical Gardens Adult Pollinator Program (2): Contact Julie Mazzoleni
 Botanical Gardens Children's Program, 2 days (2): Contact Julie Mazzoleni
 Introduction to Beekeeping Class – May 29th (2): Contact Carl Fisher

OPEN POSITIONS

Education Chair AND Membership Chair: Contact Dave Elsen

Free Education Opportunity

Capitol Bee Supply

Check out the link below for some **FREE** e-learning topics by
<https://www.facebook.com/CapitolBeeSupply/posts/2890729754299781>



Club Education Reimbursement Opportunity

Club members are eligible for up to \$25/ calendar year for continuing education

Eligibility Guidelines:

- Must be a **current member** for at least **12 consecutive months**.
- Member must submit their request to the Leadership Team prior to the event including details on how it aligns to the Club's Mission.

Note: BCBA sponsored events, books or magazines not eligible for reimbursements.

Club Expectations of Members Receiving Education Reimbursement

- Overview of the education to the club or an education session.
- Write-up with photos and/or video for club publication.

Club & Bee Keeping History

“Telling the Bees”



The bee friend, a painting by Hans Thoma (1839–1924)



A widow and her son telling the bees of a death in the family. Painting by Charles Napier Hemy (1841–1917)

There was a time when almost every rural British family who kept bees followed a strange tradition. Whenever there was a death in the family, someone had to go out to the hives and tell the bees of the terrible loss that had befallen the family. Failing to do so often resulted in further losses such as the bees leaving the hive, or not producing enough honey or even dying. Traditionally, the bees were kept abreast of not only deaths but all important family matters including births, marriages, and long absence due to journeys. If the bees were not told, all sorts of calamities were thought to happen. This peculiar custom is known as **“telling the bees”**.

Humans have always had a special connection with bees. In medieval Europe, bees were highly prized for their honey and wax. Honey was used as food, to make mead—possibly the world's oldest fermented beverage—and as medicine to treat burns, cough, indigestion and other ailments. Candles made from beeswax burned brighter, longer and cleaner than other wax candles. Bees were often kept at monasteries and manor houses, where they were tended with the greatest respect and considered part of the family or community. It was considered rude, for example, to quarrel in front of bees.

The practice of *telling the bees* may have its origins in Celtic mythology that held that bees were the link between our world and the spirit world. So if you had any message that you wished to pass to someone who was dead, all you had to do was tell the bees and they would pass along the message. Telling the bees was widely reported from all around England, and also from many places across Europe. Eventually, the tradition made their way across the Atlantic and into North America.

The typical way to tell the bees was for the head of the household, or “goodwife of the house” to go out to the hives, knock gently to get the attention of the bees, and then softly murmur in a doleful tune

the solemn news. Little rhymes developed over the centuries specific to a particular region. In Nottinghamshire, the wife of the dead was heard singing quietly in front of the hive—“*The master's dead, but don't you go; Your mistress will be a good mistress to you.*” In Germany, a similar couplet was heard—“*Little bee, our lord is dead; Leave me not in my distress*”.

Telling the bees was common in New England. The 19th century American poet John Greenleaf Whittier describes this peculiar custom in his 1858 poem “Telling the bees”.

*Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.*

*Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!*

*And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"*

In case of deaths, the beekeeper also wrapped the top of the hive with a piece of black fabric or crepe. If there was a wedding in the family, the hives were decorated and pieces of cake left outside so that the bees too could partake in the festivities. Newly-wed couples introduced themselves to the bees of the house, otherwise their married life was bound to be miserable.

If the bees were not “put into mourning”, terrible misfortunes befell the family and to the person who bought the hive. Victorian biologist, Margaret Warner Morley, in her book *The Honey-Makers* (1899), cites a case in Norfolk where a man purchased a hive of bees that had belonged to a man who had died. The previous owner had failed to put the bees into mourning when their master died, causing the bees to fall sick. When the new owner draped the hive with a black cloth, the bees regained their health. In another tale, an Oxfordshire family had seventeen hives when their keeper died. Because nobody told them about the death, every bee died. There are plenty of such tales in Morley’s book.

The intimate relationship between bees and their keepers have led to all sorts of folklore. According to one it was bad luck to buy or sell hives, because when you sell one, you sell your luck with your bees. Instead, bees were bartered for or given as gifts. If bees flew into a house, a stranger would soon call. If they rested on a roof, good luck was on its way.

But the relationship between bees and humans goes beyond superstition. It’s a fact, that bees help humans survive. 70 of the top 100 crop species that feed 90% of the human population rely on bees for pollination. Without them, these plants would cease to exist and with it all animals that eat those plants. This can have a cascading effect that would ripple catastrophically up the food chain. Losing a beehive is much more worse than losing a supply of honey. The consequences are life threatening. The act of telling the bees emphasizes this deep connection humans share with the insect.

Honey Themed Dinner

Join fellow BCBA members for a fun filled, informative evening at LedgeStone Vineyard, Greenleaf, WI while Chef Ace Champion entertains us with his unique cooking style. A three course dinner will be served.



When: June 29, 2021

Time: 5:00 to 6:00 Happy Hour cash bar

6:00 to 8:00 Cooking demo and dinner

Cost: BCBA Member \$25 (only one member per family)

BCBA Guest \$45

- Limit - 50 persons.
- Event held outdoors and will follow health department COVID recommendations.
- Chef Ace will provide recipes for each dish.
- Door Prizes

Learn more about LedgeStone Vineyard: <https://www.ledgestonevineyards.xyz/>

Learn more about Chef Ace: <https://www.chefchampion.com/>

Registration Form

BCBA Member Name: _____ \$ 25

BCBA Guest Name: _____ \$ 45

Total: _____

Email address: _____ (to verify registration)

Send check made out to BCBA to:

BCBA C/O Carl Fisher

2811 Otto Court

Green Bay, WI 54313